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ABSTRACT

Florida Junior College at Jacksonville has developed a Community Survey process that provides information needed for adequate communication between community and college. A step-by-step description of the survey process is provided, beginning with the setting of objectives and ending with a summary of results. The objectives of the survey were to assist the college in: improving and expanding the educational programs offered in the Jacksonville area, gearing its programs to meet educational needs as felt by members of the community, evaluating the effect of its promotional efforts within the community, facilitating attendance through the removal of barriers to attendance, providing information to the entire community, evaluating the quality of its programs and their impact on the community, and program planning based on potential community demand for programs. (DB)

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FLORIDA JUNIOR COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

COMMUNITY AWARENESS SURVEY

AACJC ANNUAL CONVENTION 1974

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COMMUNITY AWARENESS SURVEY

Community and junior colleges have the capability of meeting a wide variety of community needs. More than any other educational institution the community college can respond to the need for specialized education in a number of areas, as well as provide the more traditional general education. Because of this, it is very important that the community college keep in touch with community needs, attitudes, and opinions.

In response to this need for information, Florida Junior College at Jacksonville has developed a Community Survey process which provides the types of information that will assure adequate communication between community and college. This process, as developed and tested in Duval and Nassau Counties, Florida, is capable of obtaining very accurate information in a relatively short time, at an exceptionally low cost.

The problem facing Florida Junior College at Jacksonville was to obtain an accurate picture of how the entire community felt about a wide range of educational issues. The solution as developed in Jacksonville involves a random sampling technique, using personal interviews conducted by student interviewers. Florida Junior College at Jacksonville began the initial steps of the survey process on August 1, completing interviewing in late October. A total of 867 interviews were conducted in a two-county area. Following is a step by step description of the survey process, beginning with the setting of objectives and ending with a summary of results. A PERT chart of these activities is included as an attachment.

The first step in the survey process is to determine objectives -- what is it that the College needs to know? There are two important considerations here. First, the objectives should reflect the thinking of a large segment of the College. Procedures should be established that will assume imput from many sources. A series of meetings with key personnel is desirable. The second consideration is that the objectives and the survey design be compatible. If the major concern of the College is to obtain an evaluation from former students, a random community survey is not a good design. If the College is concerned about the attitudes of certain population subgroups, such as blacks or non-high school graduates, methods for sampling only within these groups will have to be found; or, if a community-wide sample is also desired, the sample will have to be of sufficient size to assure that subgroup sample sizes are large enough to make statistically accurate projections.

Once the objectives have been set and the survey design decided upon, the next step is to assure that randomness can be achieved and the mechanics of actually conducting the survey are workable and within cost limitations. At Florida Junior College at Jacksonville the sample design decided upon was a community-wide random sample, using

personal interviews, with a sample size large enough to provide accurate projections for population subgroups. In order to assure a random sample, Bureau of the Census Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area maps were used. The College service area was divided into grids, each with an average population of 250 people. The size of these grids varied from census tract to census tract, depending on the population density. The grids were then numbered and using a random number table, a sample of 250 grids was drawn. Using the point nearest to the center of the grid as the interview location, four nearby residences were chosen using another random procedure, and an interview conducted at each residence. The above process is a form of Multi-stage Cluster Sampling.

It is also important to decide on how the survey will be conducted. At Florida Junior College at Jacksonville, students were employed as interviewers, using their own cars to get to the interview locations. This system seemed to work well. The best interviewers were those students who had some outside interest in fields related to the survey. Heavy emphasis should be placed on drawing interviewers from political science, sociology, statistics or related classes where the interviewer can relate his survey work to his school work and perhaps use it as a class project. About a third of those hired were willing to use their own cars (at 10¢ a mile) for the survey. This was ample since four interviews were required at each interview location and the students could work as teams of four.

At the same time the survey capability is being established, the instrument to be used must be designed. This is a very important step because the usefulness of the entire survey depends directly on the quality of the questionnaire. Extreme care must be taken in the wording of the questions. College personnel often use words that have unique meaning for educators. These should be avoided. Also, words or expressions can be interpreted differently by different segments of the community. It is good to have more than one question about each area of concern. This reduces the effect of bad questions and allows the measurement of attitude strengths.

Provision must also be made for a computer program capable of analyzing the survey results. This program should be able to calculate absolute and relative frequencies for each question and be able to do analysis for subgroups, identified either by population characteristic or by the way questions were answered. For this purpose Florida Junior College at Jacksonville developed its own program. However, if they are available, many canned programs will do the job.

Another very important part of the survey is the employment and training of the interviewers. The hiring of student interviewers began about two weeks before the survey was to begin, and a two-day training session was conducted for these students. It is

important that the interviewers understand the logic behind the sampling process and the necessity of making the sample selection a random one. On the first day the theory behind the survey was explained along with the steps the interviewers would have to follow to locate and conduct each interview. They were also given copies of the questionnaire and allowed to conduct practice interviews among themselves. On the second day, the interviewers were taken into the field and each conducted an interview under actual survey conditions. Afterwards, problems were discussed and questions answered. For those interviewers hired after the survey began, the theory and process were explained, and they were sent with an experienced interviewer to conduct their first interview.

The actual survey was conducted from 4:00 p.m. to 8:30 or 9:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays. This time was selected because it increased the chances of finding a good cross section of people at home. It also was more convenient for the interviewers. Emphasis was placed on interviewer neatness, the boys being required to wear ties and the girls to "dress accordingly." Each interviewer carried a badge with the College's name and seal and a letter from the President introducing the interviewer and explaining the importance of the survey to the College.

Florida Junior College at Jacksonville decided on seven objectives for its Community Survey. These were the result of a series of meetings with a wide range of College personnel and a careful analysis of the capabilities of the survey design. The objectives and questions reflected as much as possible the concerns of the College. A list of these objectives and a short description of each follows.

I. To assist the College in improving and expanding the educational programs offered in the Jacksonville area.

Questions built around this objective aimed at measuring the community's assessment of how well present educational programs meet the needs of the area. The questions also attempted to discern in which areas more effort was needed. For example:

In your opinion, which one of the following educational programs should be expanded in this area?

15.7%	a)	college degree programs
44.8%	b)	occupational/vocational training programs
17.5%	c)	adult basic education programs
12.9%	d)	special interest and cultural enrichment programs
3.3%	e)	no educational program should be expanded

Combined with other questions, these answers indicate that the community feels the Jacksonville area has enough programs for those wanting college degrees, and feels that schools would do well to add occupational/vocational training programs.

II. To assist the College in gearing its programs to meet educational needs as felt by members of the community.

College personnel expressed a desire to know more about community attitudes toward junior college or four-year college attendance and feelings about different programs offered at the Junior College, specifically occupational/vocational programs. One question was:

How strongly do you agree with the following statement? "Occupational training is for people that are not smart enough to go to college."

5.4%	a)	strongly agree
19.3%	b)	agree
11.6%	c)	undecided
42.0%	d)	disagree
20.6%	e)	strongly disagree

This, along with other answers indicated that people generally feel there is ample opportunity for success for those who do not get a four-year degree, taking some form of occupational training instead.

III. To assist the College in evaluating the effect of its promotional efforts within the community.

One of the major concerns expressed by College personnel was "how much does the community really know about Florida Junior College at Jacksonville?" The questions here dealt mostly with factual matters about the College, measuring the extent of peoples' knowledge. The results indicate that about 70 to 80% have at least a minimal knowledge of the College and its purpose.

IV. To assist the College in its efforts to facilitate attendance through the removal of barriers to attendance.

The questions built around this objective were aimed at measuring the strengths of various barriers or obstacles confronting people who might want to attend some kind of educational program. One major area of concern was the problem of transportation. Was public transportation doing the job for those who needed it, and

how was its performance rated in different areas of the city? Other barriers about which questions were asked included cost of tuition and materials, distance of travel to programs, the prestige of the school, the time required to earn a degree, and the availability of child care.

V. To assist the College in providing information to the entire community.

Another major concern of College personnel was "how could information about the College best be provided to the community?" For example, one question asked:

How can Florida Junior College at Jacksonville provide the most useful information to you?

16.9% a) advertise programs in the newspaper
28.2% b) send me a catalog on request
23.6% c) let me talk personally with a counselor at the campus
4.4% d) give me basic information over the telephone
22.9% e) present information about programs over radio and television

These and other answers indicated that people are most receptive to advertisements over radio and television. An interesting result of the above question is that 56.2% indicated that a self-initiated action was the preferred way of obtaining information. Perhaps the best way to advertise is to make it known that the College is receptive to inquiries and willing to help.

VI. To assist the College in evaluating the quality of its programs and their impact on the community.

The communities evaluation of Florida Junior College at Jacksonville was a prime concern of the survey. Was the general attitude favorable or unfavorable, and were there areas in which opinions stood out more than in others? For example:

In your opinion, how would you judge the kind of relationship Florida Junior College at Jacksonville has with the community it serves?

21.0% a) excellant
48.6% b) satisfactory
24.2% c) no opinion
1.5% d) unsatisfactory
.6% e) very poor

Similar questions were concerned with relationships with students, academic standards, the caliber of instruction, facilities, and overall performance.

VII. To assist the College in program planning based on potential community demand for programs.

Questions built around this last objective measure the extent to which the community has been directly involved with Florida Junior College at Jacksonville and the potential for future involvement. This potential for future involvement was divided by area of interest.

At the present time, what type of educational program or activity would be of greatest interest to you?

19.8%	a)	informal, brief programs such as workshops or presentations about subjects of special interest to me
16.9%	b)	training programs to improve my present skills needed in my personal life
22.3%	c)	occupational training to improve or develop skills required by my work
11.3%	d)	comprehensive training to prepare me for a career specialization
24.1%	e)	college credit courses which will count toward a college degree

Depending on how this question was answered, further questions were asked concerning the exact type of program preferred.

The Florida Junior College at Jacksonville Community Survey was conducted at a total cost of $7,854.88. A breakdown follows:

1.	Contractual Services	$4,700.00
2.	Interviewer costs	2,458.00
3.	Travel	320.00
4.	Questionnaire duplication	246.08
5.	Computer costs (est.)	30.80
6.	Final report production (est.)	100.00

The Florida Junior College at Jacksonville service area is primarily urban, but contains sizable segments of rural population. This survey technique, with slight modifications, worked well in both areas. A very large sample size was used for the survey, providing a good test of the technique. It should work even better for smaller samples. Because of these facts, the survey process as developed at Florida Junior College at Jacksonville should be easy to duplicate in almost any area of the country. Florida Junior College at Jacksonville feels that the type and quality of the information provided by this survey would make it well worthwhile for many colleges to conduct similar surveys. For further information contact:

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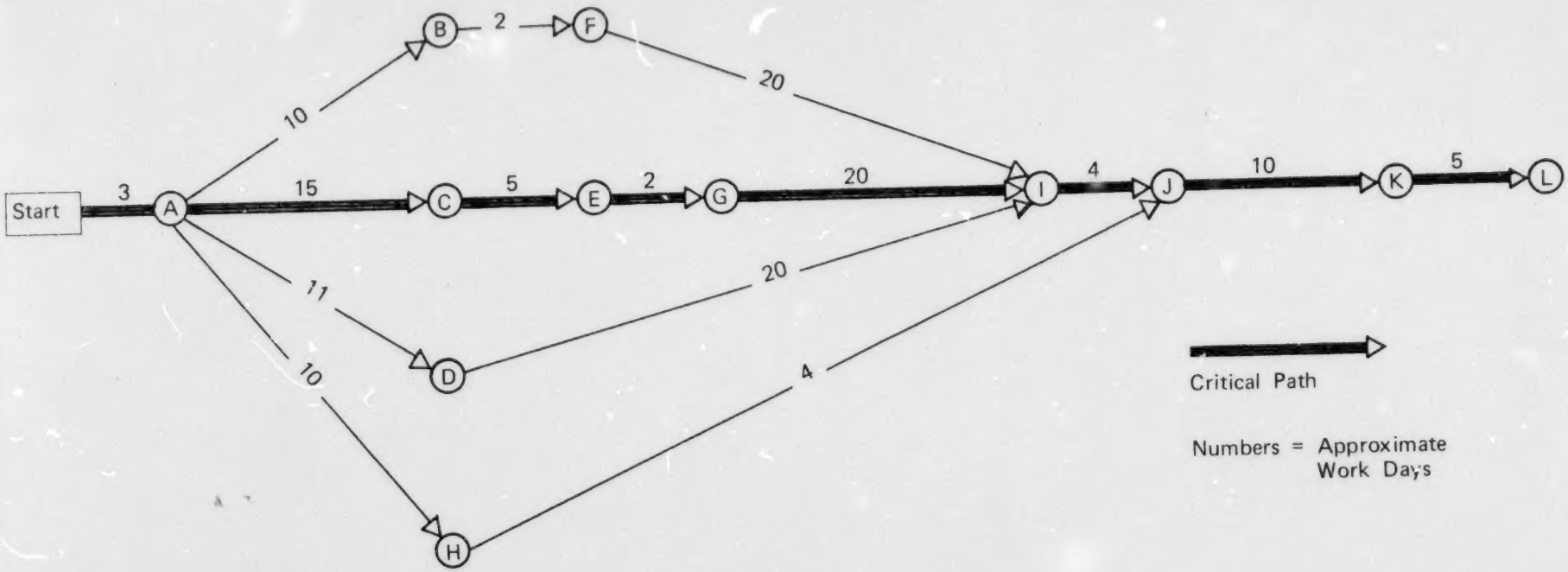
FLORIDA JUNIOR COLLEGE AT JACKSONVILLE

OPINION SURVEY



A -- Develop Objectives

B -- Establish Sampling Capabilities

C -- Design Survey Instrument

D -- Employ Personnel

E -- Print Survey Materials

F -- Sample Drawn

G -- Data Collectors Trained

H -- Computor Program Developed

I -- Survey Data Collected

J -- Computor Analysis of Raw Data

K -- Review Draft

L -- Final Report

COMMUNITY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

44.8% of the respondents were of the opinion that occupational/vocational training programs should be expanded.

74.4% (3 of 4) agreed or strongly agreed that education is the single most important factor in the improvement of Jacksonville.

80.1% (4 of 5) agreed or strongly agreed that taxpayers' expenditure for education is money well spent.

37.4% would attend a junior college instead of a four-year college due to lower tuition costs and close proximity to home.

39.3% (2 of 5) were of the opinion that the most significant reason for not attending a junior college would be that the student would be unlikely to continue beyond the junior college.

24.7% (1 of 4) agreed or strongly agreed that occupational training is for people who do not have the academic ability to be successful in college.

22.5% (2 of 9) agreed or strongly agreed that only those with college degrees get good jobs and salaries.

41.5% (2 of 5) agreed or strongly agreed that a non-high-school graduate has no chance to get ahead.

41.8% (2 of 5) agreed or strongly agreed that those with college degrees are more highly respected than those without.

41.7% (2 of 5) knew the FJC tuition fee, 40.5% (2 of 5) thought the tuition to be higher than is the case.

89.4% (9 of 10) underestimated the annual enrollment.

78.1% (4 of 5) knew the location of at least one FJC campus.

Approximately 3 of 4 respondents knew of the college-credit and non-college-credit offerings of the College.

Public transportation would be an important factor to 31.3% of the respondents if they wish to attend FJC.

Other factors given consideration in making a decision to attend a higher education institution are as follows:

	Designated Important
cost of tuition and materials	85.9%
distance to college	69.1%
prestige of college	59.3%

Community Survey Highlights

	Designated Important
availability of public transport	41.1%
course availability during non-working hours	66.0%
availability of child care services	44.6%

41.4% (2 of 5) get information concerning local matters from T.V. news; 31.3% (3 of 10) from newspaper.

Approximately 3 of every 4 respondents have heard of FJC, but 40.1% (2 of 5) have very little or no information regarding FJC.

69.6% (7 of 10) are of the opinion that FJC has an "excellent" or "satisfactory" relationship with the community.

50.5% (1 of 2) were of the opinion that the program offerings of FJC are "extensive" or "very extensive".

82.4% (4 of 5) were of the opinion that FJC has made "some" or a "significant" contribution to improving Jacksonville.

20.3% (1 of 5) were of the opinion that they have considerably benefited from attending FJC.

67% (2 of 3) rated FJC as "excellent" or "good".

27.2% of the respondents had a family member who is attending or has attended FJC.

75.9% (3 of 4) would select FJC as a first or second choice if they were planning to continue their education.

Of those respondents expressing interest in career-preparation programs, approximately 1 of 3 respondents designated business related (including secretarial) fields; 1 of 5, health related; 1 of 5, technical fields.

Approximately 1 of every 4 respondents who desired skill upgrading training would attend the college campus to receive such training, 1 of 10 desired that such training be offered at their place of employment.

Of those respondents who expressed an interest in personal-use education, approximately 3 of 10 desired home-skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting) courses; 1 of 4, financially-related education courses; 1 of 5, basic skills courses.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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MAY 22 1974

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